gold, precious stones, electronic goods, Indian & Foreign currency, synthetic fabrics & other misc. goods valued at Rs. 4800.57 lakhs were seized by the field formations of Customs & Central Excise in metropolitan cities and at International Airports. 135 persons were arrested in this regard.

(d) Seized goods are disposed on becoming pipe for disposal. Consumer goods are disposed of by retail sale at customs counters or through NCCF and consumer co-operative societies. Bulk or trade goods are either auctioned or sold through tender, while hazardous or dangerous goods and Narcotics are destroyed as per instructions issued by the Government. Gold and silver are being sold through retail counters in the four major Custom Houses *i.e.* Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi and Chennai.

[English]

Portraits of Patriots

97. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of competent authorities to select the portraits of patriots to be displayed in Courts as well as in the Government offices; and

(b) the details regarding the procedure followed in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Economy Liberalization

98. SHRI SOHAN BEER :
KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :
PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the pace of liberalization and economic reforms is very slow;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to accelerate the pace of economic reforms and to ensure that all sections of the society are benefited the reform ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) Since June 1, 1996 several measures have been taken by the Government in the areas of foreign investment and infrastructure development. The Foreign Investment Promotion Council (FIPC) has been set up, the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has been streamlined and made more transparent and the first every guidelines for direct foreign investment have been announced in the areas which are not covered under the automatic route. The list of industries eligible for automatic approval of foreign equity upto 51 per cent has been expanded and a new list for automatic approval of foreign equity upto 74 per cent has been announced. Foreign Institutional Investors have been allowed to invest in unlisted companies and in corporate and Government securities, and guidelines for External Commercial Borrowings have been liberalised.

Other reforms include setting up of Disinvestment Commission, independent Tariff Commission, enhancing investment ceilings for small scale industries, delicensing of consumer electronics, changes in sugar policy, deregulation of prices and distribution of certain categories of coal and amendment of Coal Mines Act.

Since December, 1996 the Government has allowed automatic approval for foreign equity participation upto 74 per cent in key infrastructure industries such as electricity generation and transmission, non-conventional energy generation and distribution, and construction activities in the area of roads, bridges, railbeds, ports and harbours. Sector specific reforms incorporating tax holidays and concessional import duty have been introduced for telecom and power sector. The Government has recently announced guidelines for private investment in highway development through Build Operate-Transfer (BOT) route.

All these reforms are being implemented by the Government with a high priority to special programmes of poverty alleviation and employment generation and the development of social sector for achieving distributive justice.

[English]

PMRY Loans in Kerala

99. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of money spent so far by the nationalised banks for the self-employment under the PMRY Scheme during the last three years;

(b) the total amount of money spent in Kerala; and

(c) the number of applications pending before the nationalised banks for this purpose in Kerala ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b) The details of sanction and disbursement by nationalised banks under Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojna (PMRY) Scheme (All India and in Kerala State) during the last three year are as under :

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Programme Year	Sanctioned amount		Disbursed amount	
	All India	Kerala	All India	Kerala
1	2	3	4	5
1994-95	66390.79	2518.33	41537.75	1868.55

1	2	3	4	5
1995-96	101412.33	2980.35	67715.49	2498.63
1996-97 (Upto Dec.'96)	44599.75	1911.95	19949.46	1024.11

(c) The Reserve Bank of India has reported that the number of pending applications with the nationalised banks in Kerala under PMRY as at the end of December, 1996 was 2268.

NTC Showrooms

100. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees working at the Showrooms of NTC (SM) and NTC (MN) Ltd. are paid different pay scales in different showrooms/mill gate shops;

(b) whether the said issue was discussed by the Board of Directors of National Textiles Corporation Ltd.;

(c) if so, the decision taken in this regard;

(d) whether the Chief Managing Director of NTC (SM) Ltd. has submitted a proposal to resolve the issue;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the decision taken by the Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Coal Policy

101. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether a new integrated coal policy is no the anvil; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of the policy are as under :

(i) Degregulation of the prices and distribution of D Grade of non-coking coal, hard coke and soft coke with immediate effect.

(ii) Allowing Coal India Limited (CIL) and the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL) to fix the prices of E, F, and G Grades of non-coking coal till 1st January, 2000, once every six months by updating the cost indices as per the escalation formula contained in the 1987 report of the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices.

(iii) Allowing CIL and SCCL to fix the prices of E, F and G Grades of non-coking coal in relation with the market prices and to distribute these grades of coal after 1st January, 2000.

(iv) Setting up of an independent body to monitor detailed and regional exploration of coal and lignite resources in the country.

(v) Allocation of new blocks on the basis of a competitive bidding process in which Indian companies including nationalised coal companies may participate.

Economic Cooperation with China

102. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any step to establish economic cooperation with China;

(b) if so, whether both the countries have identified new ways and areas to establish Indo-China economic ties, and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) Steps taken towards improving India-China economic relations include the setting up of a Joint Economic Group headed by Minister for External Affairs on the Indian side and the Minister for foreign Trade & Economic Co-operation on the Chinese side. The JEG, has been functioning since 1988 and the Sixth session of the JEG, is scheduled in early 1997.

Both countries extend to each other MFN status, a number of agreements have been signed between the two countries to facilitate bilateral trade and economic cooperation, these include an Agreement, on Avoidance of Double Taxation, Air Services Agreement, Shipping Agreement, an MoU on Banking Relations and several MoUs on functional cooperation covering different sectors like forestry, environment, coal, agriculture, Science & Technology etc. have been concluded.

A Joint Business Council has been established with FICCI and China Council for promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). The CII has also signed an MoU with All China Federation of Industry and Commerce and with CCPIT.

Border Trade is progressing through Pithoragarh in U.P. and Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh.

Trade has been growing with China and in 1995-96 it was of the order of Rs. 1097 crores (Exports) and Rs. 2732 crores (Imports).

[Translation]

Remote Computer Look in Terminal Facility

103. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of such Banks in Maharashtra where 'Remote Computer Look-in Terminal facility' has been introduced;